

District Councillor's Report – November 2022

General

I remain concerned about the future of the District Council's finances. Rishi Sunak has taken over following Liz Truss's disastrous six-week premiership with the national economy in turmoil and a huge budget gap to fill. He and Chancellor Jeremy Hunt have already spoken repeatedly of difficult decisions to come and that means spending cuts.

Local councils across the country, have seen their budgets chopped away remorselessly over the past 12 years and Huntingdonshire (HDC) has been no exception. Left with a £2.5m inherited deficit, for 2023-24, from the previous administration, very high inflation and limited reserves, HDC is now bracing itself for what comes next.

Environment Agency Funding for a Study of Natural Flood Management Opportunities Received

We were informed, at our last LLFA Flood Group, that funding has been received from the Environment Agency for a study of natural flood management opportunities to the west of Buckden and Southoe. Recommendations and proposals could include the use of Natural England, catchment sensitive, farming and may involve payments to landowners and biodiversity credits.

The aim of the study is to look at longer term ways of preventing flooding in the area in the future. Huntingdonshire can expect both draughts and flooding as global warming increases. Already we are seeing flash flood type events where heavy rainfall highlights the poor maintenance of much of our road drainage. If you have been flooded, or nearly flooded, in the recent heavy downpours please report it to Cambridgeshire County Council via:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/report-a-flood>

Check for flooding:

<https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/location?location=huntingdonshire>

New Monthly Expanded Huntingdon Market to be Launched

Huntingdonshire District Council, in collaboration with Huntingdon Town Council and Huntingdon BID, are launching a monthly expansion of Huntingdon market to focus on local artisan traders that will be known as Fayre on the Square.

The Huntingdon market currently takes place every Saturday and once per month, starting with Saturday 12th November, the market will be expanded from its usual location along the High Street to also take over the Market Square.

The expansion will allow for a greater number of market stall holders to take part in the market, as well as use the extra space to provide activities and entertainment that will rotate monthly. Each market will open from 10am until 3pm. The market will feature live entertainment, locally produced goods and artisan gifts.

Extension to Finance Granted to Complete the Buckden to Brampton Cycle and Footway

We have been waiting for such a long time for this and it was great to be part of the Cabinet that approved the financial extension this evening. Let's hope that it get completed on time and we get better walking and cycling between Buckden and Brampton next year. Please see below:

An up to £100,000 CIL allocation was approved at HDC Cabinet on 18th March 2021 towards the improvements to the cycle/footway including a safer crossing point at Buckden Road, Brampton. This project was offered under a time limit of 12 months to allow details of the future maintenance arrangements, confirmation of landowner consent and an updated business case to be provided. It has been confirmed that County Council own the land and will be responsible for future maintenance.

Whilst there have been delays due to review of options and speed monitoring work needing to be undertaken, the project is now back on track with a revised completion date of May 2023. An extension of time to 31st May 2023 for the completion of this project, has been approved.

Let's hope that there are no further delays!!!

Wishing you all well,

Martin

Martin Hassall

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